

Fit Kids Legislative History

OKLAHOMA FIT KIDS COALITION

Legislative Accomplishments 2004-2006

Reducing Childhood Obesity in Oklahoma

In creating its Legislative package, the Oklahoma Fit Kids Coalition adopted the five-point approach recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to help states combat the crisis of childhood obesity.

- Limiting intake of foods of low-nutritional value
- Increasing physical activity
- Increasing consumption of fruits and vegetables
- Increasing breastfeeding
- Reducing "screen time"(TV/computer time)

In the first three years of its existence, the Coalition has made tremendous strides in four of these five recommendations!

2004

HEALTHY AND FIT SCHOOLS COMMITTEES: SB 1627

(Sen. Bernest Cain / Rep. Darrell Gilbert)

SB 1627 creates the Healthy and Fit Kids Act of 2004, directing each school to establish an Advisory committee comprised of parents, local health care professionals and community leaders to study and make recommendations to their school principal regarding health physical fitness, nutrition, health education and health services.

2005

PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS: SB 312

(Sen. Bernest Cain / Rep. Susan Winchester)

SB 312 re-establishes physical education in elementary schools (K-5) by requiring a minimum of 60 minutes per week of physical education or exercise program. The bill requires middle and high schools to offer physical education as an elective.

GETTING JUNK FOODS OUT OF SCHOOLS: SB 265

(Sen. Bernest Cain / Rep. Susan Winchester)

SB 265 eliminates access to sugary drink and snacks in elementary schools, except for special occasions. In Middle Schools, SB 265 requires that only health choices, except diet soda, be accessible during the day, and limits access to sugary snacks and beverages to after school and evening events, and special occasions. For high schools, the bill required the availability of some healthy choices to be offered.

2006

FARM TO SCHOOL: HB 2655

(Rep. Susan Winchester / Sen. Daisy Lawler)

HB 2655 creates the *Farm to School* program to improve the nutrition of Oklahoma's students, and create new markets for Oklahoma's farmers, by providing schools with locally grown fresh produce. The bill builds on the successful efforts of the Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture and the Oklahoma Food Policy Council. It provides for the study of obstacles to the operations of the Program, and seeks recommendations that address needed changes, such as creating farmers cooperatives, developing processing facilities, and addressing distribution challenges.

SB 46 appropriates \$100,000 to the Department of Agriculture to fund the program.

RESOURCES FOR SCHOOLS : SB 1459

(Senator Bernest Cain / Rep. Susan Winchester)

SB 1459 provides new resources to the Healthy & Fit School Advisory Committees to make their assessments and begin improvement the environment of their local school campus. It provides the opportunity for the Committees to be fully engaged in monitoring the progress of their campus toward ensuring healthy food options and fitness activities.

SUPPORT FOR BREASTFEEDING: HB 2358

(Rep. Dale DePue / Senator Susan Paddock)

The Oklahoma Fit Kids Coalition supported the efforts of the Central Oklahoma Breastfeeding Advocates in their legislative initiative of HB 2358. This bill provided guidelines for employers to create a positive environment for new mothers who wish to continue breastfeeding their babies after returning to work.

Remaining to be done: Fitness Testing (Update as of 9/16/06)

In 2006, the Oklahoma Fit Kids Coalition proposed legislation to require fitness testing in Oklahoma schools. Although the rates of childhood obesity have been calculated based on scientific surveys, no data exists at the local school level to calculate the scope of the epidemic. Without baseline data, Oklahoma cannot measure success or failure for the programs and activities being put into place.

SB 1461, authored by Senator Bernest Cain and Rep. Susan Winchester, would have directed the State Department of Education to facilitate the development of a fitness assessment software program with the ability to measure / track a variety of components of student fitness. Measurements could include body mass index, aerobic endurance, strength and flexibility. The program would have the capability of creating confidential reports for parents that include explanations of the data and suggestions for appropriate actions. The bill directed that the program be piloted in selected elementary schools for testing of 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students. The bill died for lack of consideration by the House of Representatives.

Update: The State Dept's. of Education and Health are proceeding with the development of the software, and will pilot the program in several elementary schools in 2007. Fit Kids can monitor its success and perhaps return in 2008 with legislation for statewide implementation.

For more information contact Legislative Chair, Anne Roberts at 405 / 236-KIDS, or aroberts@oica.org

Fit Kids Legis History.doc